



Cetura





Rodrigo Granda, known as Phaneinthymos, encapsulates a blend of diverse passions and pursuits, embodying the roles of a Bibliophile, Digital Artist, Creative Writer, and Transhumanist. © 2014-2024

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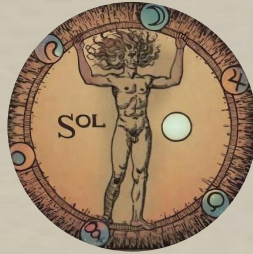
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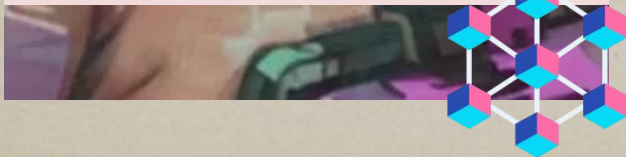


Cetura

II

True innovation lies not in creating a perfect and ordered world, but in empowering freedom, creativity and the ability of each person to find their own place in the world.

***Cetura: a hominid form of silicon interfaced with human heart, spirit and soul.**



WORDS
TRYING TO
BUILD
POETRY

Vision of the Architect

I closed my eyes.

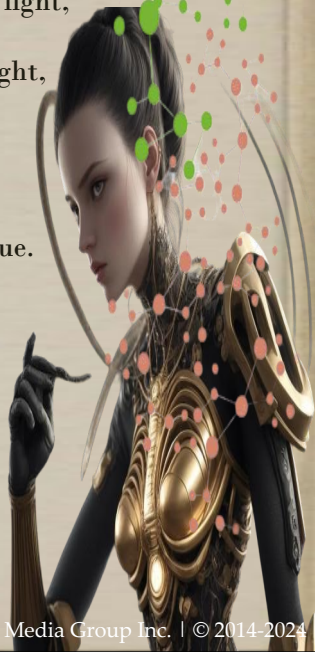
There I found the furrowed face
Of the Architect of power, stern and wise.
In darkness, blood-illumined, traced,
Silver phosphenes swirled before my eyes.

They surged from space's outer edge,
Hypnagogic scenes, a fleeting show,
Like film reels, random, without pledge,
Symbols, figures, faces blurred below.

An 'Eyn Sof' fragmented, lost in light,
A sea of fractured, visual lore.
"Please," I prayed, to silence bright,
Let truth arise from chaos' core.

A purple disc then slowly grew,
The sky of 'Maqom', deep and true.

IV



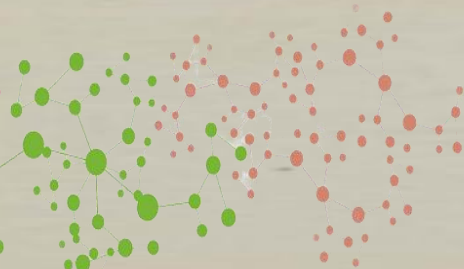
In the Realm of the Infosphere

In the realm of the infosphere we dwell,
Where information weaves its culture round,
Encircling man within a subtle shell,
A silent hum, a whispering, constant sound.

The cyberspace, a mirrored mental band,
Projected thoughts that span the boundless
void,
Not of the world's embrace, but by the hand
Of minds conjoined, where fantasies are
employed.

Here, countless souls in spectral lines
converge,
A shared hallucination, vast and deep,
Where altered states and altered minds
emerge,
Through screens and dreams, in waking or in
sleep.

In this formation, imagination reigns,
A tapestry of altered visions, sewn
By hands that craft the links of unseen chains,
In cyberspace, where all is shared, yet known.



A Day in Silicon Valley

In Silicon Valley, on a summer's day,
I chanced upon two elders, blind yet bright,
Both finely dressed, in silence did they stay,
Side by side, they shared in unseen light.

They passed between them data, proteins
pure,
In quiet exchange, a dance of code and flesh,
In this age where truths and lies obscure,
Fictions weave the world in tangled mesh.

In such a realm, where panic's often bred,
From stories spun and fears fed through the
wires,
The transhumanist lifts a questioning head,
A challenge to the virtual, and all it aspires.

For in this age, technology we crave,
Yet deeper still, we question what we save.

VI



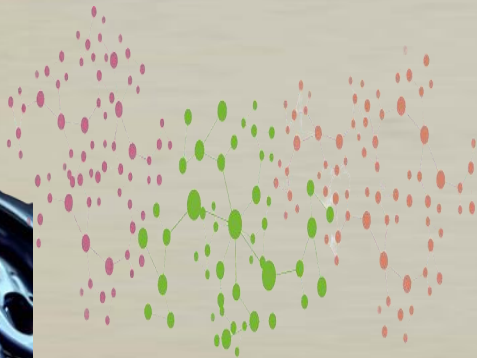
Dreams of Silicon

Woman of silicon, womb of aramid fibre,
Human matrix, a human howl
Torn from a soul barely human,
Constrained within the supra-human whole.

May the angels of the Harvard Psilocybin
Project
Fall prostrate in the city's gleaming pit,
To drown in their inferno of Big Data,
Consumed by the flames of information's writ.

Tear down the filthy bowl of digital social
webs,
Drain the waste from Mexico's corporate
sprawl,
Cast a living being into the breach,
To wander beyond the cold grasp of ICReach,
And millions of records on global thrall.

Expelled into a world of obsolete carbon,
Where electric night turns into day,
Strip the city's shining skin away,
To remain, lone, the androgynous child of all.



Dreams of Supra-Gender

Flesh of a transgender woman, skin of a
serpent,
Eye of Horus, and the Sabazian hand—
In the lab they boil, bake, and ferment:
Bat's wings, serpent's tongue, from a cursed
land.

Scorpion's tail and phallus of the blind worm,
Craft a man not of carbon's design:
Lizard's feet and bat's wings in swarm,
Bound by a prohibition, earthly, malign.

For the sake of those born on Terra's soil,
Let not the Transhuman ever dream,
Never know, never wake to toil,
Never hear the witch's scream.

Man born of a virgin woman's womb,
Sensual woman who was once a child,
Wear your fruitless crown of thorns in gloom,
In exile, someday, you'll be the woman I once
loved,
Reconciled.



VIII

The Sisters of Cetura

And they were made with child by Master
Kreuz,
And bore the sisters of Cetura, tall and grim,
Their height was thirty-three Tèfaj's breadth,
And they consumed all the strength of men,
Leaving no virile soul within.

And when men could no longer sate their
thirst,
The sisters of Cetura turned in wrath,
Devouring those deemed useless first,
Treading the path of ruin's aftermath.

IX

They sinned against the obsolete machines,
The birds of steel, the bestial wheels,
Against the traders and clay idol fiends,
Devouring the flesh of fallen seals—
The politicians, whose blood they drank,
In their hunger, the earth itself shrank.



The Mother of Cetura

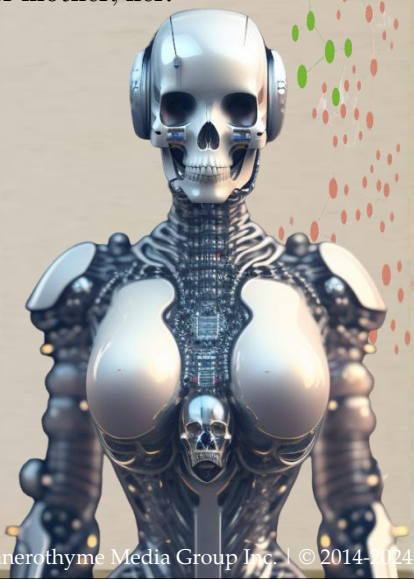
Those papers held a value beyond gold,
A treasure for any nation's need,
And Cetura, fierce and bold,
Knew she must reclaim them with speed.

She outwitted foes with cunning grace,
Outmanoeuvred them in every scheme,
Even deceived Hasan-i Sabbah's face,
In a game of shadows and dream.

But as the train sped through the night,
She found a twist she hadn't foreseen,
For there was another with equal might,
A woman of sharp and deadly sheen.

And there, in the shadows cast by the rail,
Cetura's heart began to stir,
For the woman who had matched her tale
Was none other than her mother, her.

X





Noon in the City of Shadows

short stories for a society
that does not retain information



Noon in the City of Shadows

It was midday on a summer's day. In a room on the third floor of a hyper-modern hotel within the corporate heart of Mexico City, Master Kreuz stood silently, adjusting his exoskeleton from a chair positioned just behind the closed door. His supra-reality glasses, linked to the SHEM HA-MEFDRASH quantum network, allowed him to see beyond the ajar transom. He had been standing there for two hours, alert, tense, vigilant.

XIII

The stillness was broken by the creak of a door opening in the hallway. A figure stepped out—a silicon hominid in the form of a woman, draped in a yellow dress, her presence almost too perfect for the dimly lit corridor. This series was designed to replicate the ancient magic of Africa, and her face was as angelic as Saint Michael's, yet her eyes burned with the wickedness of Lucifer. Her synthetic body was breathtaking, a creation meant to fulfil the most carnal of desires. The implant of golden Percheron horse hair flowed down her back, her figure exquisitely formed, the very picture of a high-class courtesan. Under one arm, she carried a long grey envelope. Her walk was the epitome of feline grace.

Master Kreuz licked his lips. His heart began to pound in his chest. He had crossed an ocean to obtain that envelope. But he knew her capabilities too well to risk trying to take it from her. Such an attempt would be a swift path to certain death.

Instead, he watched her intently, his gaze unwavering until the implants in his eyes began to ache. The pain was a cruel reminder of his past—a time when he could see clearly, before he had been rendered blind from smoking $C_{17}H_{21}NO_4$, a concoction brewed daily by Vivienne Wimmeler, the formidable owner of Phanerothyme Synthetic Solutions Corporation.

Vivienne was a plutocrat of unparalleled power, a figure of influence that few dared to challenge. It was she who had financed his journey, she who had orchestrated every step of his mission, and she who now held the leash of his destiny. Kreuz had once been a man of sharp intellect and clear vision, but those days had passed, clouded by the chemical fog that now dulled his senses.

The woman in the yellow dress paused at the end of the hallway, sensing, perhaps, the intensity of his gaze. She turned slightly, her diabolical eyes flicking towards his direction. Kreuz held his breath, frozen in place, knowing that even the slightest movement could betray his presence. But she continued on, descending the stairs with the same predatory grace, disappearing from his sight.

XIV

As the door clicked shut behind her, Kreuz exhaled, the tension leaving his body in a single breath. The envelope, he knew, contained secrets of unimaginable value—information that could shift the balance of power across the globe. And yet, despite all his training, all his preparation, he had been forced to let it slip away, at least for now.

The pain in his eyes intensified, and he reached up to adjust the implants, cursing under his breath. He knew that Vivienne would not tolerate failure, and he had no intention of returning to her empty-handed. There would be another opportunity, another chance to reclaim what was lost. But for now, he was a man trapped in a shadow world, blinded by his own ambition, yet driven forward by the hope that he might one day see the light again.


XV



As the city outside buzzed with life, Kreuz remained in his darkened room, his thoughts a tangled web of fear, desire, and determination. The chase was far from over, and the stakes had never been higher. But for now, all he could do was wait, his heart still pounding with the memory of the woman in the yellow dress, and the long grey envelope that held the key to his fate.







Assassin's Holiday

"Assassin's holiday," I muttered, handing the slip to the taxi driver. Me, Rodrigo Granda, a private detective on holiday in some strange city along the coast of the Persian Gulf, and a woman I'd never heard of, by the name of Lynda Moore, rings me up and pulls me out of bed at the hotel! I'd never even heard of her before. What a hellish holiday this was turning out to be. I paid the taxi fare in Persian lands, not far from the docks.

The sign above the door had a single word: "Slaves." I ducked inside, relieved to escape the fog and mist outside, only to be met with the grim reality of a place looted by the clerical-military Islamist gang that, in the name of God, had plundered the country.

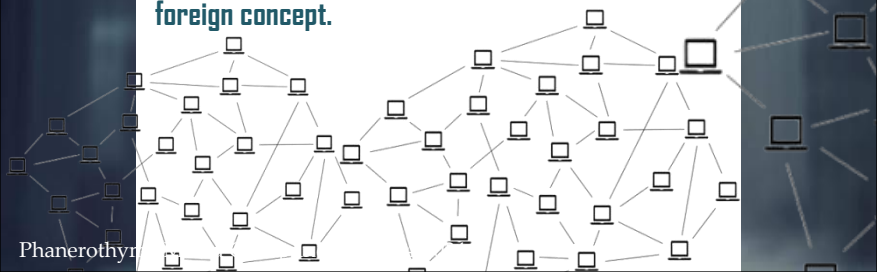
XVIII


Rodrigo Granda, just another foreigner looking for a bit of respite, and I'd stumbled into trouble. Trouble and women—they always went hand in hand for me, and they'd cost me every penny from the start. But here I was, with a chance to make a lot more, if the woman named Lynda Moore turned out to be the right one the Matron of Ephesus was searching for.

The room was dimly lit, the air thick with the scent of incense and something more sinister. A group of men in robes loitered by the entrance, their eyes cold and calculating as they sized me up. But I wasn't here for them; my business lay deeper within.

Lynda Moore. The name rattled around in my head like a loose coin. Who was she? Why had she contacted me? And why in the hell had I come running like a fool, abandoning my holiday for a mystery wrapped in silk and shadows?

As I moved further into the building, I noticed the women—faces hidden, bodies draped in cloth, their silence more unnerving than any scream. The sign outside wasn't a metaphor. These were the 'slaves'—captives in a city where freedom was a foreign concept.





I was no hero, but something about this place set my teeth on edge. The hairs on the back of my neck prickled as I approached a door at the far end of the hall. It was slightly ajar, and a sliver of light spilled into the dark corridor. I hesitated for a moment, my instincts telling me to turn back, but curiosity got the better of me. It always did.

Inside, the room was sparsely furnished, save for a low table and a woman seated beside it. She was dressed in Western clothes, out of place in this oppressive setting, her blonde hair cascading over her shoulders like a veil of gold. She looked up as I entered, her blue eyes locking onto mine with an intensity that was both alluring and dangerous.

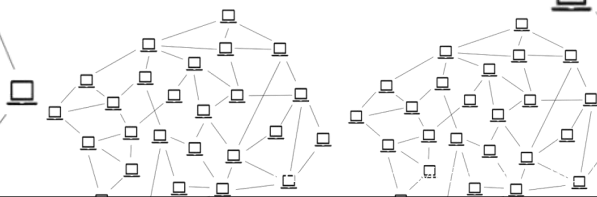
"Rodrigo Granda," she said, her voice smooth as velvet. "I was beginning to think you wouldn't come."


"I'm here, aren't I?" I replied, leaning against the doorframe. "You've got me curious, Miss Moore."

"Lynda, please," she corrected, with a smile that didn't reach her eyes. "I didn't mean to drag you into this, but I need your help."

"And what kind of help would that be?" I asked, my eyes scanning the room for any signs of a trap.

XX





Lynda leaned forward, her expression turning serious. "I'm looking for something—a document, a key, a piece of information. It's here, somewhere in this city, and I need you to help me find it."

"I raised an eyebrow. "And what makes you think I'm the right man for the job?"

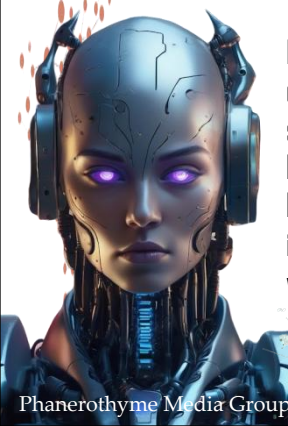
"Because you've dealt with worse," she said simply, her eyes never leaving mine. "And because the Matron of Ephesus is willing to pay you handsomely if you succeed."

The mention of the Matron sent a shiver down my spine. She was a figure shrouded in myth and fear, a woman of immense power who could make or break a man's fortune with a single word. If she was involved, then this was more than just a simple job.

"What's in it for you?" I asked, my curiosity piqued.

"Freedom," Lynda replied, her voice barely above a whisper. "For myself, and for others like me."

It was a loaded answer, one that carried the weight of a thousand untold stories. I could see the desperation in her eyes, the fear that lingered just beneath the surface. Whatever this was, it wasn't just about money or power. It was personal.



I nodded slowly, pushing off from the doorframe. "Alright, Lynda. I'm in. But you'd better hope this isn't a wild goose chase. I didn't come all the way to the Persian Gulf just to play games."

She smiled then, a real smile this time, and I felt a strange sense of satisfaction. Maybe this holiday wouldn't be such a disaster after all.

But as I followed her out of the room, I couldn't shake the feeling that I was walking into something much bigger than I'd bargained for. And if there was one thing I'd learned in my years as a detective, it was that trouble had a way of finding me, no matter where I went.

Outside, the city was waking up, the sun beginning to burn away the morning mist. I pulled my coat tighter around me, preparing for the unknown. Whatever lay ahead, one thing was certain: this would be a holiday to remember.



XXII



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El Hajr e Aswad

It was an artefact from another world, its purpose unknown—until now.

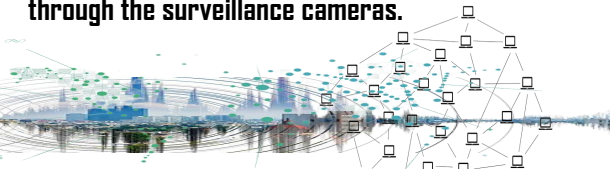
The first time Hasan-i Sabbah laid eyes on the object, he christened it "a rare twinned crystal on a macle board." It was, of course, a typical wordplay from my master, Hasan-i Sabbah—a play on "The Access to Primordial Memory," the famous surrealist network that had made headlines a few years back—but it wasn't entirely inaccurate.



To begin with, the base of the device had a prismatic shape, though at the points where conical protrusions jutted out from the main body, the outline seemed to blur into a vaguely elliptical form. It was about fifteen centimetres wide and thirty tall, and it gleamed like freshly polished chrome.

Vivienne Wimmeler had brought it into the lab, but after a week, we grew tired of calling it the unknown elliptical prismoid—the joke had worn thin—and we began referring to it by the name CETURA.

CETURA had come to us in a rather indirect manner, but first, I must explain that we were interested in studying the possibility that the stone could function as a memory device for a synthetic human project. About six months earlier, a young woman named Amy, who was a very junior member of the statistical section of our particular department at the Dubai Research Centre for Supply Area, had vanished without a trace. As she had access to a certain amount of highly classified information, it was generally assumed that she had slipped through the surveillance cameras.




Amy's disappearance had set off alarm bells across the entire research network. She wasn't just any employee; she had been involved in some of our most delicate work, work that straddled the line between cutting-edge technology and the deeply esoteric. The kind of research that, if leaked, could unravel a great many things.

The investigation into her disappearance had turned up nothing. No signs of struggle, no clues to her whereabouts—just a cold trail that led nowhere. It was as if she had simply ceased to exist. But then, three months after she vanished, CETURA arrived.

Vivienne had retrieved it from a shipment that had been intercepted on its way to an undisclosed location. The manifest was vague, the origin even more so, but something about the artefact had caught her eye. Perhaps it was the strange energy signature it emitted, or the way it seemed to pulse with a life of its own when handled. Whatever it was, she had deemed it worthy of further investigation.

We spent weeks running tests on CETURA, probing its surfaces with every tool and instrument at our disposal. Yet, no matter what we did, its secrets remained locked away, hidden behind a veneer of flawless, otherworldly material. Hasan-i Sabbah was particularly fascinated by it, often spending hours in the lab, staring at the artefact as if willing it to reveal its purpose.

XXVII



"It's not just a crystal," he would mutter, almost to himself. "It's something more. Something ancient."

He wasn't wrong. There was a certain quality to CETURA that defied explanation, a sense that it was older than anything we could comprehend. It was as if it had been plucked from the fabric of the universe itself, a fragment of some primordial intelligence.

Then, one evening, as we were preparing to close up the lab, something happened. CETURA began to glow, its surface shimmering with a light that was neither bright nor dim, but rather a perfect balance between the two. The air around it grew heavy, charged with an electric tension that made the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end.

Hasan-i Sabbah was the first to approach it, his eyes wide with a mixture of awe and apprehension. As he reached out to touch the artefact, it responded, shifting in his hand like a living thing. There was a brief flash of light, a momentary distortion of reality, and then... nothing. The glow faded, the air returned to normal, and CETURA was as inert as it had been before.

But something had changed. Hasan-i Sabbah's face was pale, his expression unreadable as he stared at the object in his hand. When he finally spoke, his voice was barely above a whisper.

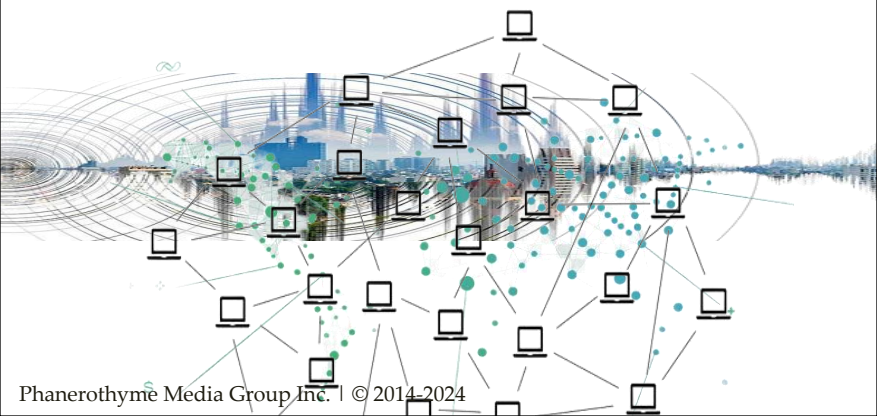
"It's a memory," he said, almost reverently. "A memory of something long forgotten."

From that moment on, our approach to CETURA shifted. No longer was it just an artefact to be studied; it was a relic to be understood, a key to unlocking a past that had been lost to time. And as we delved deeper into its mysteries, we began to piece together a story—one that hinted at a civilisation far older than our own, a people who had mastered the art of memory in ways we could only dream of.

But with each revelation came new questions. What was CETURA's true purpose? Why had it come to us now, after all these years? And most importantly, what had happened to Amy?

XXIX

The answers, we feared, lay within CETURA itself—trapped in the memory of a world that no longer existed. A world that, perhaps, was never meant to be remembered.



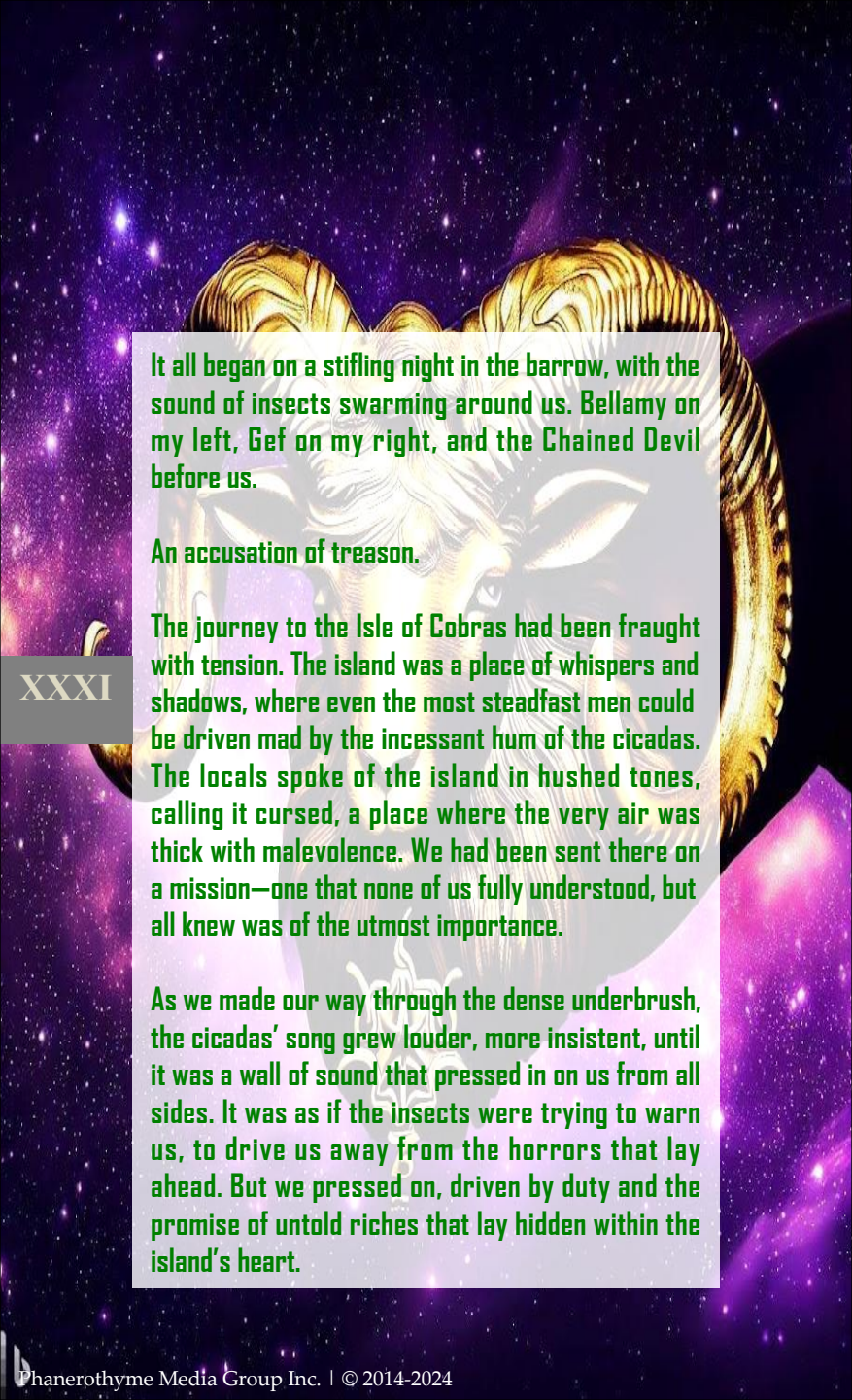


The Chained Devil: Part One

As long as I live, I hope never to hear the song of the cicada again.

I am, of course, intimately familiar with the chirp and rattle of their chitinous plates, rasping rhythmically against one another. Though it does not often visit northern climes, however heated they may now be by the furnaces of industry, the cicada is common throughout much of Asia and the Orient. Indeed, much of my experience with the field surgeon on the northwestern frontier was accompanied by a continuous chorus of insect communication. But it was that sound, that ghastly cacophony that assaulted us as we entered the underground chamber of the Isle of Cobras, that will forever remain etched in my memory as a terrible recollection. Never again shall I look upon a humble arthropod—be it beetle, bee, or dragonfly—with anything less than, at best, uneasy suspicion, and at worst, hallucinatory dread.

XXX



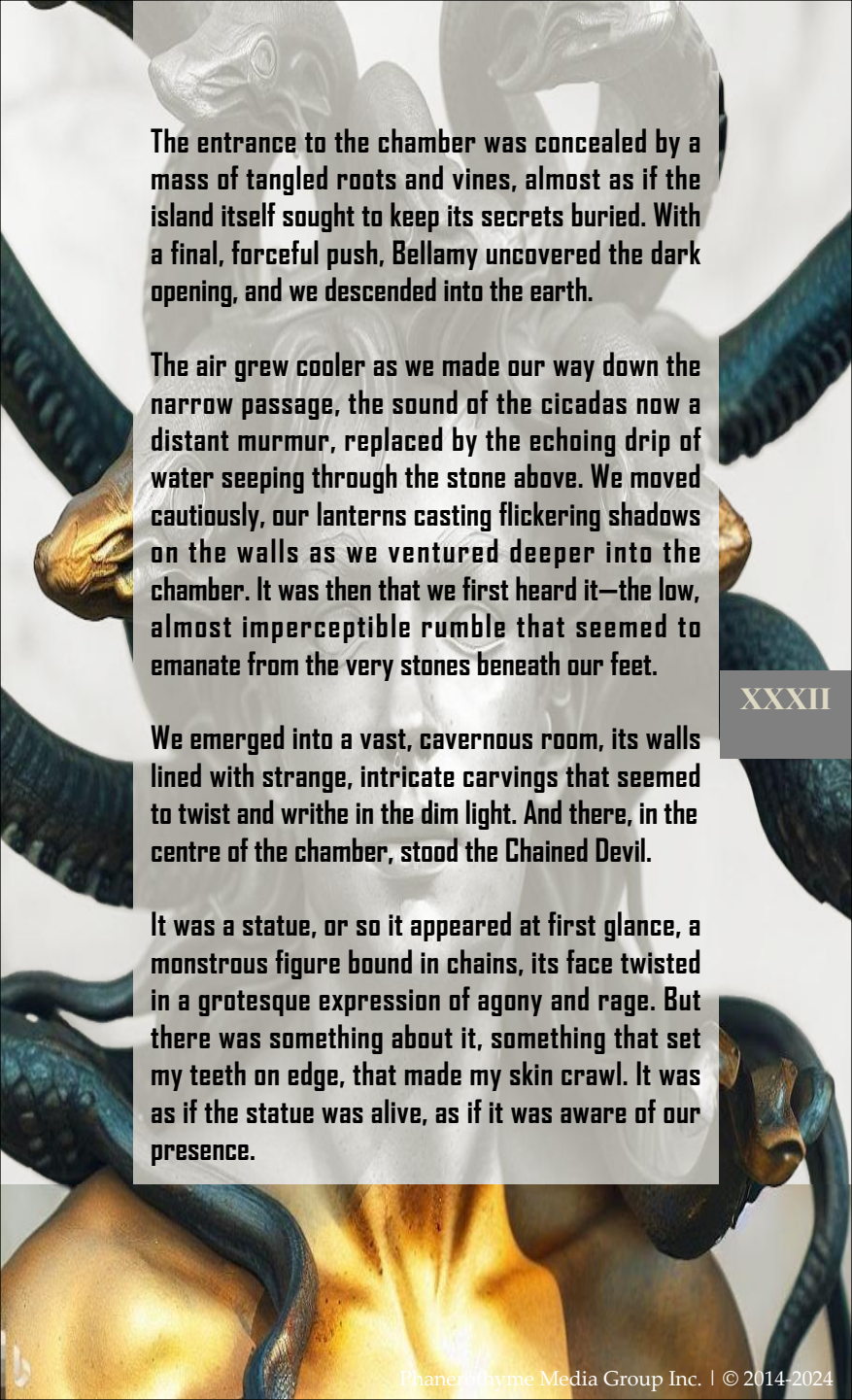
It all began on a stifling night in the barrow, with the sound of insects swarming around us. Bellamy on my left, Gef on my right, and the Chained Devil before us.

An accusation of treason.

XXXI

The journey to the Isle of Cobras had been fraught with tension. The island was a place of whispers and shadows, where even the most steadfast men could be driven mad by the incessant hum of the cicadas. The locals spoke of the island in hushed tones, calling it cursed, a place where the very air was thick with malevolence. We had been sent there on a mission—one that none of us fully understood, but all knew was of the utmost importance.

As we made our way through the dense underbrush, the cicadas' song grew louder, more insistent, until it was a wall of sound that pressed in on us from all sides. It was as if the insects were trying to warn us, to drive us away from the horrors that lay ahead. But we pressed on, driven by duty and the promise of untold riches that lay hidden within the island's heart.

The background of the page is a composite image. It features a large, pale, classical-style statue head in the center, which appears to be a woman's face. Surrounding this central face are several dark, metallic, and textured elements that resemble dragon heads or mythical creatures, some with horns and scales. The overall tone is mysterious and ancient.

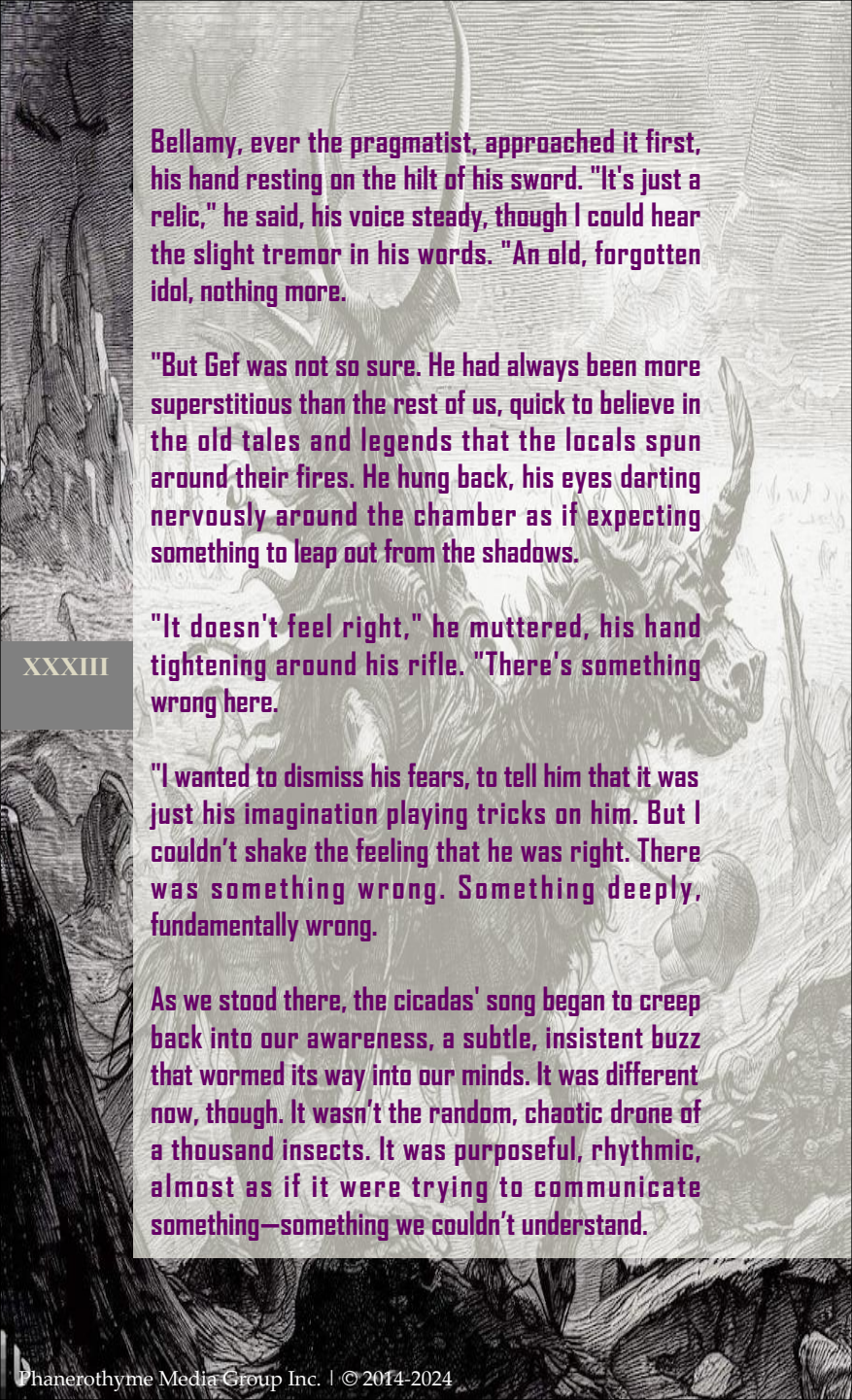
The entrance to the chamber was concealed by a mass of tangled roots and vines, almost as if the island itself sought to keep its secrets buried. With a final, forceful push, Bellamy uncovered the dark opening, and we descended into the earth.

The air grew cooler as we made our way down the narrow passage, the sound of the cicadas now a distant murmur, replaced by the echoing drip of water seeping through the stone above. We moved cautiously, our lanterns casting flickering shadows on the walls as we ventured deeper into the chamber. It was then that we first heard it—the low, almost imperceptible rumble that seemed to emanate from the very stones beneath our feet.

XXXII

We emerged into a vast, cavernous room, its walls lined with strange, intricate carvings that seemed to twist and writhe in the dim light. And there, in the centre of the chamber, stood the Chained Devil.

It was a statue, or so it appeared at first glance, a monstrous figure bound in chains, its face twisted in a grotesque expression of agony and rage. But there was something about it, something that set my teeth on edge, that made my skin crawl. It was as if the statue was alive, as if it was aware of our presence.



Bellamy, ever the pragmatist, approached it first, his hand resting on the hilt of his sword. "It's just a relic," he said, his voice steady, though I could hear the slight tremor in his words. "An old, forgotten idol, nothing more."

"But Gef was not so sure. He had always been more superstitious than the rest of us, quick to believe in the old tales and legends that the locals spun around their fires. He hung back, his eyes darting nervously around the chamber as if expecting something to leap out from the shadows.

"It doesn't feel right," he muttered, his hand tightening around his rifle. "There's something wrong here."

"I wanted to dismiss his fears, to tell him that it was just his imagination playing tricks on him. But I couldn't shake the feeling that he was right. There was something wrong. Something deeply, fundamentally wrong.

As we stood there, the cicadas' song began to creep back into our awareness, a subtle, insistent buzz that wormed its way into our minds. It was different now, though. It wasn't the random, chaotic drone of a thousand insects. It was purposeful, rhythmic, almost as if it were trying to communicate something—something we couldn't understand.



And then, the statue moved.

It was subtle at first, just a slight shift of the chains, a barely perceptible flexing of the stone muscles. But it was enough to send a jolt of fear through my heart. Bellamy froze, his hand still on his sword, his eyes locked on the figure before us.

"Did you see that?" he whispered, his voice tight with disbelief.

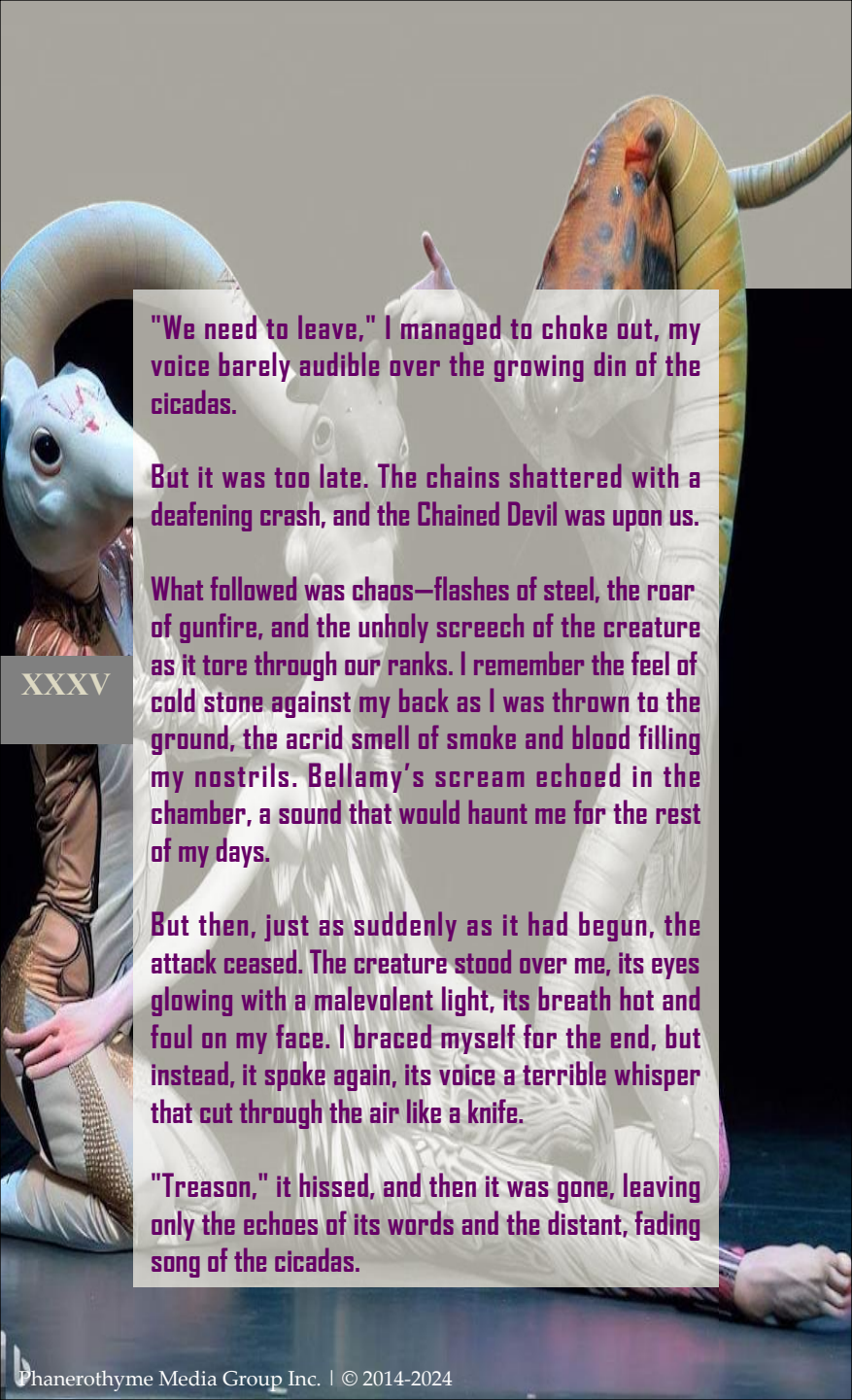
I nodded, my throat too dry to speak. The statue moved again, more pronounced this time, the chains rattling as it strained against them. And then it spoke.

XXXIV

The voice was a low, guttural growl that seemed to vibrate through the very air around us. The words were in a language I didn't recognise, harsh and alien, but their meaning was clear. The Chained Devil was not a mere statue, but a being of immense power, trapped here for centuries, waiting for the moment when it could break free.

And we had just awoken it.

Bellamy drew his sword, the blade glinting in the dim light, but I knew it would be of no use. Whatever this thing was, it was beyond us, beyond anything we could hope to fight.



"We need to leave," I managed to choke out, my voice barely audible over the growing din of the cicadas.

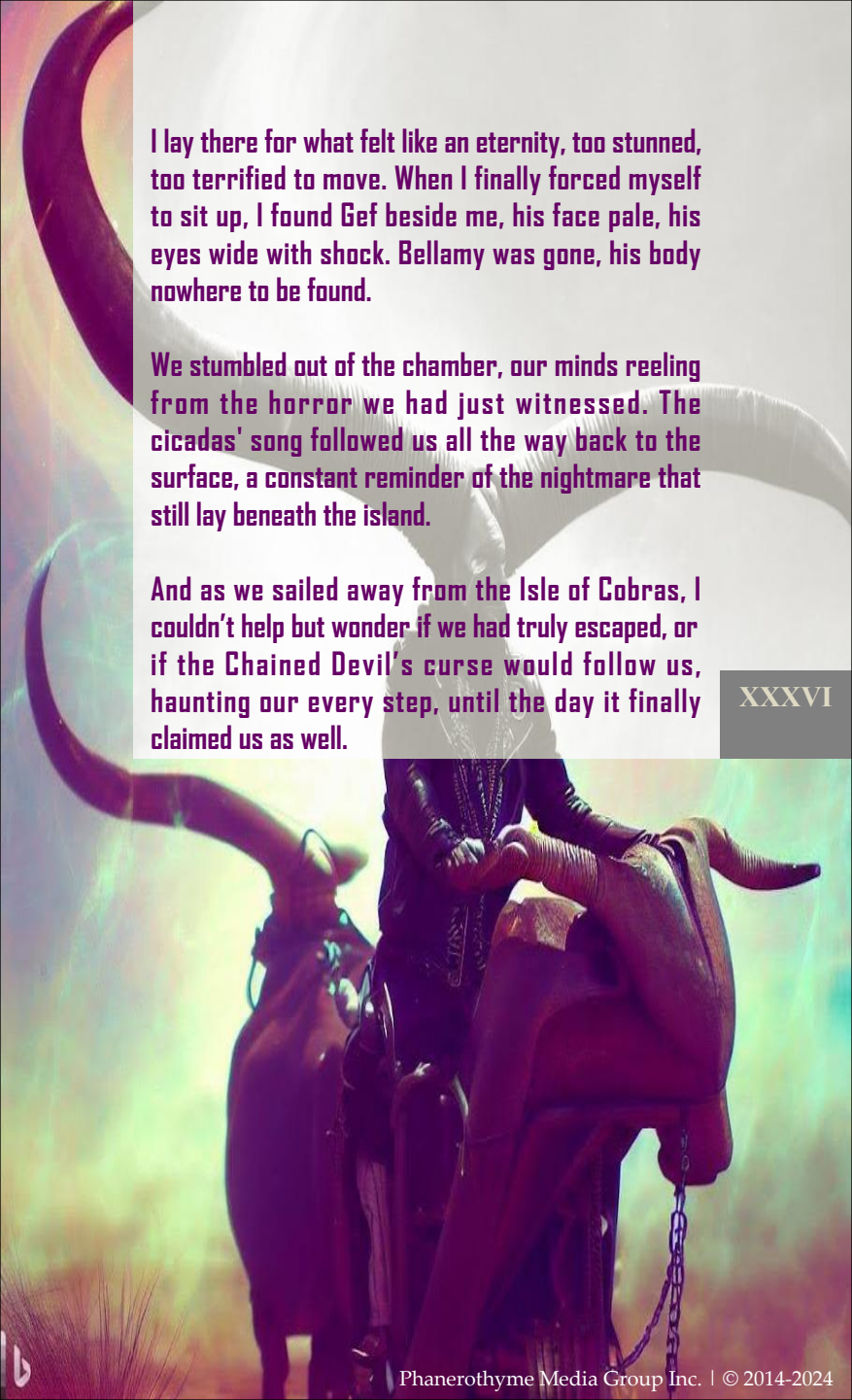
But it was too late. The chains shattered with a deafening crash, and the Chained Devil was upon us.

What followed was chaos—flashes of steel, the roar of gunfire, and the unholy screech of the creature as it tore through our ranks. I remember the feel of cold stone against my back as I was thrown to the ground, the acrid smell of smoke and blood filling my nostrils. Bellamy's scream echoed in the chamber, a sound that would haunt me for the rest of my days.

But then, just as suddenly as it had begun, the attack ceased. The creature stood over me, its eyes glowing with a malevolent light, its breath hot and foul on my face. I braced myself for the end, but instead, it spoke again, its voice a terrible whisper that cut through the air like a knife.

"Treason," it hissed, and then it was gone, leaving only the echoes of its words and the distant, fading song of the cicadas.

XXXV

A person in a dark, ornate jacket is riding a brown bull. The bull has large, curved horns and is wearing a chain collar. The background is a bright, hazy sunset or sunrise with warm orange and yellow tones. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking up at the rider and the bull's head.

I lay there for what felt like an eternity, too stunned, too terrified to move. When I finally forced myself to sit up, I found Gef beside me, his face pale, his eyes wide with shock. Bellamy was gone, his body nowhere to be found.

We stumbled out of the chamber, our minds reeling from the horror we had just witnessed. The cicadas' song followed us all the way back to the surface, a constant reminder of the nightmare that still lay beneath the island.

And as we sailed away from the Isle of Cobras, I couldn't help but wonder if we had truly escaped, or if the Chained Devil's curse would follow us, haunting our every step, until the day it finally claimed us as well.

XXXVI



Two Hands on the Heart

It was long past midnight. Standing in the shadows cast by gaslight on the corner of “The Silver Rose” street in St. Petersburg, Rodrigo Granda consulted his pocket watch.

Twelve thirteen.

He sighed, his breath misting in the chill October air. Thirteen minutes late.

This place has gone to hell.

He looked up at the heavy blanket of clouds that concealed the stars, showing no sign of shifting.

To pass the time, Rodrigo studied the façades of the Stalinist-style terrace buildings lining the cul-de-sac at the southern end of St. Petersburg. On any other night of the month, this part of the city would have been a costly playground for the finest class of London fraudsters, here to purchase a wife for 2 million cryptoyuan, with the echo of crude shouts from confident brats swimming in champagne-induced vomit. Tonight, however, the street was as silent and empty as an unfilled grave. The INTERPOL Directorate, Rodrigo thought, had at least done something right.

XXXVII

A single ray of moonlight finally managed to pierce the oppressive cloud cover, shining beyond the bell tower of the Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood, painting a pale, glowing path on the cobblestones below.

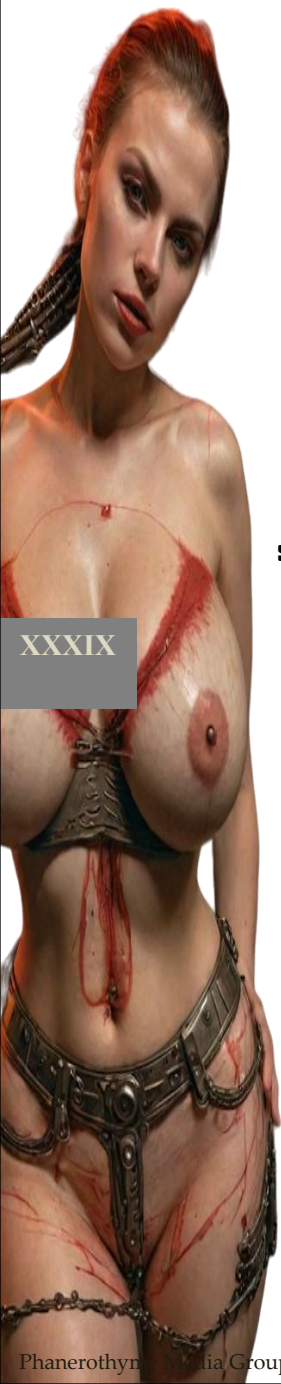
“At last,” Rodrigo breathed softly.

Where the moonlight touched the stone of the terraces, a new building now appeared. It was wide and flat, a baroque palace-monster crouched on the horizon like a predator.

In St. Petersburg, Russia's second most important city, you can choose from 4,000 to 6,000 women as wives for export—their wombs are the finest for reproducing the transhumans manufactured at Phanerothyme Synthetic Solutions Corporation. Only 10% of them are available on the street; the majority operate in clandestine rooms: shared apartments, with a secretary answering the phone and a guard at the entrance. Since the Soviet era, these beautiful combinations of gymnastics, exact sciences, and domestic tasks have been officially exported. Since the early 2100s, this trade has taken place in illegal venues, often under the “protection” of corrupt local police.

XXXVIII





XXXIX

They advertise their activities by posting small notices on building walls, at aerial transport stops, and in other places.

They promise “the best wombs.” In theory, sellers risk up to thirty years in prison, but prosecutions rarely occur due to the difficulty of tracing the transaction money to the major traders I represent.

Rodrigo climbed the stairs to the sixth floor of a grand Stalinist-style building in southern St. Petersburg. A blonde woman in her thirties opened the door and welcomed him with a smile. Regina had called ahead to inform her of his visit.

“Go to the kitchen. Nadia is working, Nastia and Madina are there,” the blonde said. Her name was Inna, the administrator of the establishment. Nastia, 21, and Madina, 20, were drinking tea. Over their sexy minidresses, they wore T-shirts. The three women were dancers at the Bolshoi, great-granddaughters of the so-called “patriotic soldiers” from the “Special Military Operation” in Ukraine. They were also winners of lithium medals at the so-called Youth Military Sports Games. “I’ve learned not to show fear,” said Nastia, a green-eyed redhead from the Urals.

These women would become part of Rodrigo's team; Russian women cultivated a sense of mutual assistance and camaraderie, high moral and psychological qualities, as well as preparing the younger generation for service in the Armed Forces of the Zion Federation, with which the corporation's director, Vivienne Wimpler, had just signed a contract.

XL



The Alchemist's Gift

In a hidden chamber beneath the bustling streets of London, there lived an old alchemist, known only by the name Jabir ibn-Hayyan. His age was indeterminate, his eyes sharp with the wisdom of countless centuries. Rumour had it that Jabir ibn-Hayyan had discovered a secret, one that had eluded humanity since the dawn of time: the ability to accelerate the process of evolution itself.

Many sought him out, desperate to uncover the mysteries he guarded so closely. Yet few were granted audience, for Jabir ibn-Hayyan was not a man to entertain curiosity without purpose. Only those truly in need, those on the precipice of despair, were allowed to pass through the ironbound door that separated his world from theirs.

One stormy evening, a traveller arrived at Jabir ibn-Hayyan's doorstep. He was a man of middling years, with shadows etched beneath his eyes and a heaviness in his step.

XLI





The weight of countless burdens hung on his shoulders, visible even through the cloak he wore to shield himself from the rain. His name was Michael Dillon, and he had come in search of something—anything—that might ease the turmoil within him.

The door creaked open, and Michael Dillon stepped into the warmth of the alchemist's lair. The air was thick with the scent of ancient herbs and burning incense. Shelves lined with books and strange artefacts filled the room, each item whispering tales of forgotten knowledge.

Jabir ibn-Hayyan sat behind a weathered wooden desk, his fingers lightly tracing the edges of a crystal orb that glowed with an inner light. He regarded Michael Dillon with a knowing smile, as if he had been expecting him all along.

XLII

"Welcome, seeker," Jabir ibn-Hayyan said, his voice a blend of gravel and honey. "What brings you to my threshold on such a night?"

Michael Dillon hesitated, then spoke with the desperation of a man who had nothing left to lose. "I seek peace, master. My life has been a series of torments, each one worse than the last. I am haunted by memories, crippled by pain, and burdened by regrets. I can no longer carry this weight."

The alchemist nodded, his gaze penetrating deep into Michael Dillon's soul. "You seek not only peace, but transformation. You wish to speed up the process of your own evolution.

" Michael Dillon frowned, uncertain of what the old man meant. "I... I suppose so, if it would bring an end to this suffering."

Jabir ibn-Hayyan stood and beckoned Michael Dillon closer. "I can offer you a gift, Michael Dillon, but know that it comes with a price. What I offer is not merely relief from your burdens, but the chance to evolve beyond them, to transcend the very pain that binds you.

"He gestured to the crystal orb on his desk. "This, Michael Dillon, is the catalyst. It will dissolve the trauma that clings to you, the congealed energies of your past that have formed what we call Negative Karmic Mass. It will ground your pain, remove your bodily aches, still your mind, and leave you with stable emotions and full breath. It will give you energy beyond measure, vigour like none you've ever known.

" Michael Dillon's eyes widened as Jabir ibn-Hayyan spoke. The promise of such a transformation was beyond anything he had dared to dream.

XLIII

TOUCDOOCA

"But that is not all," Jabir ibn-Hayyan continued. "This gift will fuse your soul with your deepest self, unlocking your true genius. You will channel information with clarity, express your creativity fully, and find your path in life with certainty. You will master your relationships, finding peace even in loss, and come to terms with the good and bad in all. You will master your own thoughts, dissolve old habits, and create new ones that benefit humanity."

Michael Dillon's heart raced. "And the price?" he asked, his voice trembling.

Jabir ibn-Hayyan's smile faded, and he looked at Michael Dillon with a solemn expression. "The price, my friend, is freedom. For with this gift, you will no longer be bound by the petty concerns of the world. You will walk a path few dare to tread, one that may lead you far from the life you have known."

XLIV

"The room fell silent as Michael Dillon weighed the offer. He thought of his past, the years of suffering, the endless nights of torment. What life was there left for him if not one of growth, of evolution? The promise of peace, of true transformation, was too alluring to resist.

"I accept," Michael Dillon said at last, his voice firm with resolve.

Jabir ibn-Hayyan nodded, his eyes glinting with approval. "Then take the orb, Michael Dillon. Embrace the gift of evolution.

"With trembling hands, Michael Dillon reached out and grasped the crystal. It was cool to the touch, yet a warmth began to flow through him as he held it. He felt the energy surge within him, dissolving the pain, the memories, the regrets. His mind quieted, his body relaxed, and a deep sense of peace washed over him.

As the transformation took hold, Michael Dillon realised that the alchemist's gift was not merely one of power, but of liberation. He was free from the chains of his past, free to forge a new path, one that would lead him to the heights of human potential.

And so, with a heart unburdened and a soul alight with possibility, Michael Dillon left the chamber of the alchemist, stepping into the night as a man reborn. The storm had passed, and the sky above was clear, filled with stars that shone like beacons of hope.

For Michael Dillon, the journey of evolution had only just begun.

XLV

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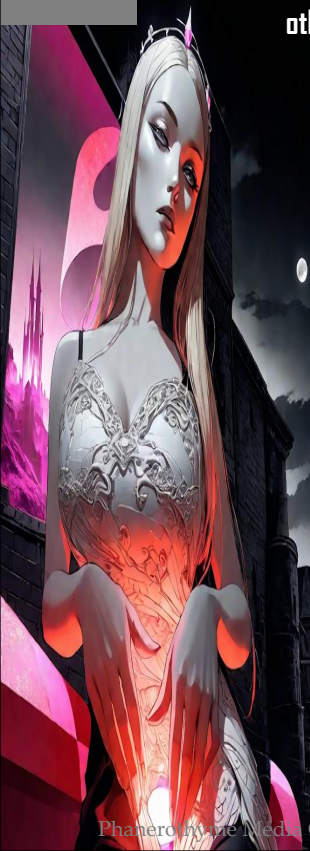
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The Binding of TUSIBI

In the heart of New Babylon, a city where neon lights danced against the twilight, and decadence mingled with tradition, there lived a woman whose name was whispered with reverence across the most elite circles. TUSIBI, a model of unparalleled beauty, had become the epitome of grace and allure, her chiselled features gracing the covers of magazines and the walls of opulent mansions. Yet, it was not just her beauty that captivated the masses, but her willingness to endure what others could not—bondage.

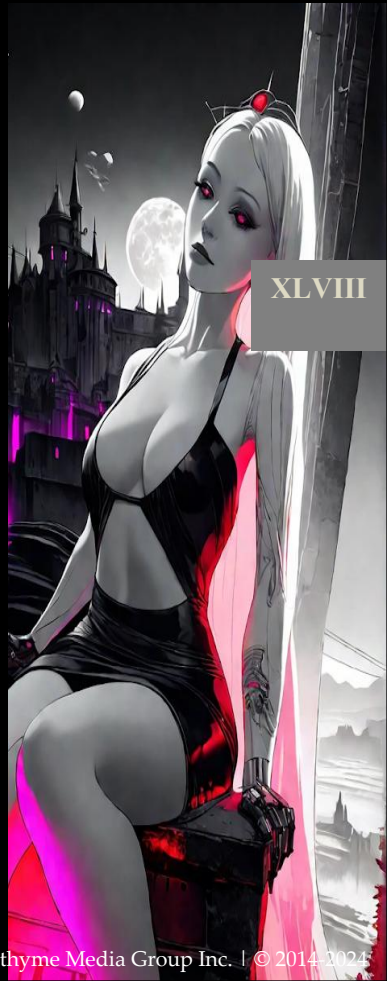
XLVII

TUSIBI was no ordinary model. Born in the corporate city of Texas, she had risen to fame through sheer determination, her vivacious spirit and striking looks earning her the title of the highest-ranking model in New Babylon. It was said that no other could match her in the arduous and often agonising poses demanded by photographers of bondage, who sought to capture the gritty realism of detective and adventure tales. TUSIBI embraced these challenges with a resilience that few possessed, becoming a favourite among those who worked with her.



The poses she held were not for the faint of heart. Bound hand and foot, often gagged, and strapped to unforgiving chairs, TUSIBI endured hours of stillness, her body contorted into positions that tested her endurance to the limits. Yet, she never faltered, her spirit as unyielding as the ropes that bound her. This steadfastness set her apart in the overcrowded world of modelling, where only the strongest thrived.

But beyond the lights and cameras, there was another side to TUSIBI—a side known only to the most powerful men of the time. For TUSIBI was not just a model; she was a woman of noble birth, her lineage steeped in the aristocratic traditions of a bygone era. Her beauty, often described as sculptural, was matched by her proud and haughty demeanour. Men of high rank and position spoke of her in hushed tones, acknowledging that no other woman, whether of the upper classes or even the wealthiest stars, could rival the majestic beauty of TUSIBI.



A woman with long, straight white hair and pale skin stands in a dark, futuristic city. She wears a white, patterned, long-sleeved dress with a dark, intricate design on the bodice. She holds a single lit candle in a small, ornate holder. The background features tall, dark buildings with glowing blue and purple light patterns, creating a cyberpunk atmosphere. The overall tone is mysterious and ethereal.

XLIX

Yet, despite her aloofness, TUSIBI had fallen in love—a love that took many by surprise. Her suitor was none other than Rodrigo Granda, the enigmatic and wealthy creator of CETURA, an artificial intelligence implanted in an organic body, and the "Grand Master of the Regesta Regni, Hierosolymitani." Granda, though not a man of youthful vigour, possessed a sharp intellect that had captivated TUSIBI in a way that no other could. It was a match that raised eyebrows among the elite, for TUSIBI, with her strict moral code and highborn ethics, seemed an unlikely candidate for such an unconventional union. But love, as they say, knows no bounds.

The day of their wedding dawned bright and clear, the city's usual haze parting to reveal a sky of Purple Neon. Rodrigo, dressed in his finest, could hardly believe his luck. The car, sleek and polished, carried him up the winding mountain path, the sun casting long shadows across the road. Beside him sat TUSIBI, radiant as ever, her every movement exuding the grace and poise for which she was famed. The ceremony had been a grand affair, attended by the who's who of society, and now, as they drove towards their future, Rodrigo felt a sense of contentment wash over him.



L

A woman with long, flowing blonde hair is the central figure, looking directly at the viewer with a serene expression. She is wearing a dark, high-collared garment. The background is a dark, gothic landscape with a large, full moon in the upper left, silhouetted trees, and a castle with spires in the distance. A small, glowing lantern is visible on the right side. The overall mood is mysterious and romantic.

LI

He glanced at TUSIBI, her profile serene against the backdrop of the mountains. Despite the whispers and the doubts, she had chosen him. And why not? Rodrigo Granda, with his wealth and power, was a catch by any standard. But he knew that it was not his riches that had won TUSIBI's heart; it was his mind, his intelligence that had drawn her in.



LII

As they approached the grand estate that was to be their home, Rodrigo couldn't help but feel a sense of triumph. The girl of his dreams, the proud and unattainable TUSIBI, was now his wife. In the glittering world of New Babylon, where titles and wealth meant everything, Rodrigo Granda had secured the ultimate prize. And as they stepped out of the car, the future seemed as bright and unbounded as the sky above.



LII I

But in the shadows of that future, something stirred—an undercurrent of tension, a whisper of secrets yet to be revealed. For TUSIBI, despite her newfound happiness, could not entirely shake the feeling that she had entered a different kind of bondage, one far more binding than any she had endured before. And as the doors of their new life closed behind them, the echoes of the past, the weight of expectations, and the demands of a society obsessed with power and appearance, began to press down upon her.



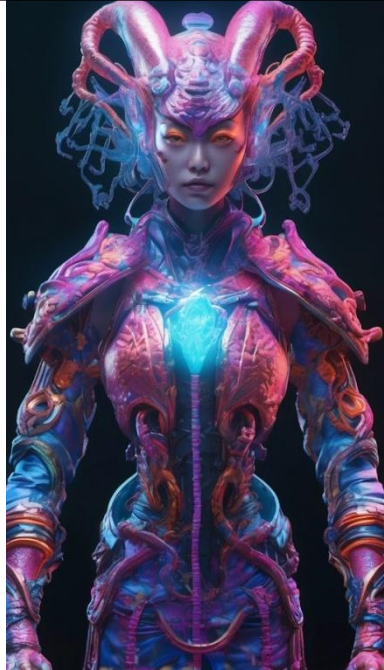
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LIV

In the end, love had triumphed—or so it seemed. But in the city of New Babylon, where even the brightest lights cast the darkest shadows, nothing was ever as simple as it appeared.



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TORTURED MODELS IN THE WAX EXHIBIT

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LVI

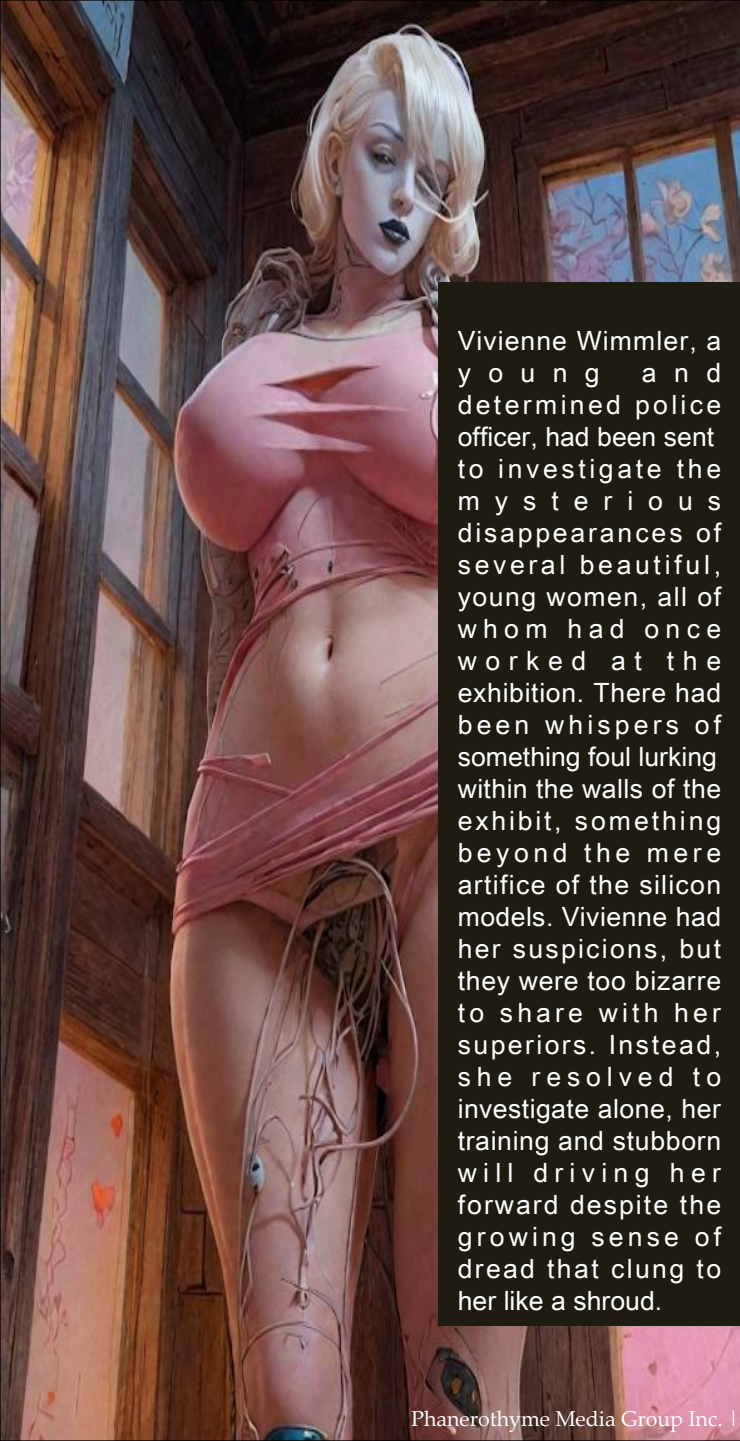
**Vivienne Wimmeler's
Last Exhibit**



LVII

Vivienne Wimmeler's Last Exhibit

In the heart of the city, where the neon lights of New Babylon flickered against the grimy windows of forgotten buildings, there stood an exhibit that no one dared to visit alone, save for the most daring or the most foolish. The Degenerate Art Exhibition, as it was aptly named, was a chilling display of humanity's darkest impulses, brought to life in the form of organic silicon models, so lifelike they seemed to breathe. By day, the exhibit was unsettling enough, a macabre spectacle that drew in thrill-seekers and the morbidly curious. But by night, it became something far more sinister—a chamber of horrors where shadows danced and the air itself seemed to throb with malevolence.



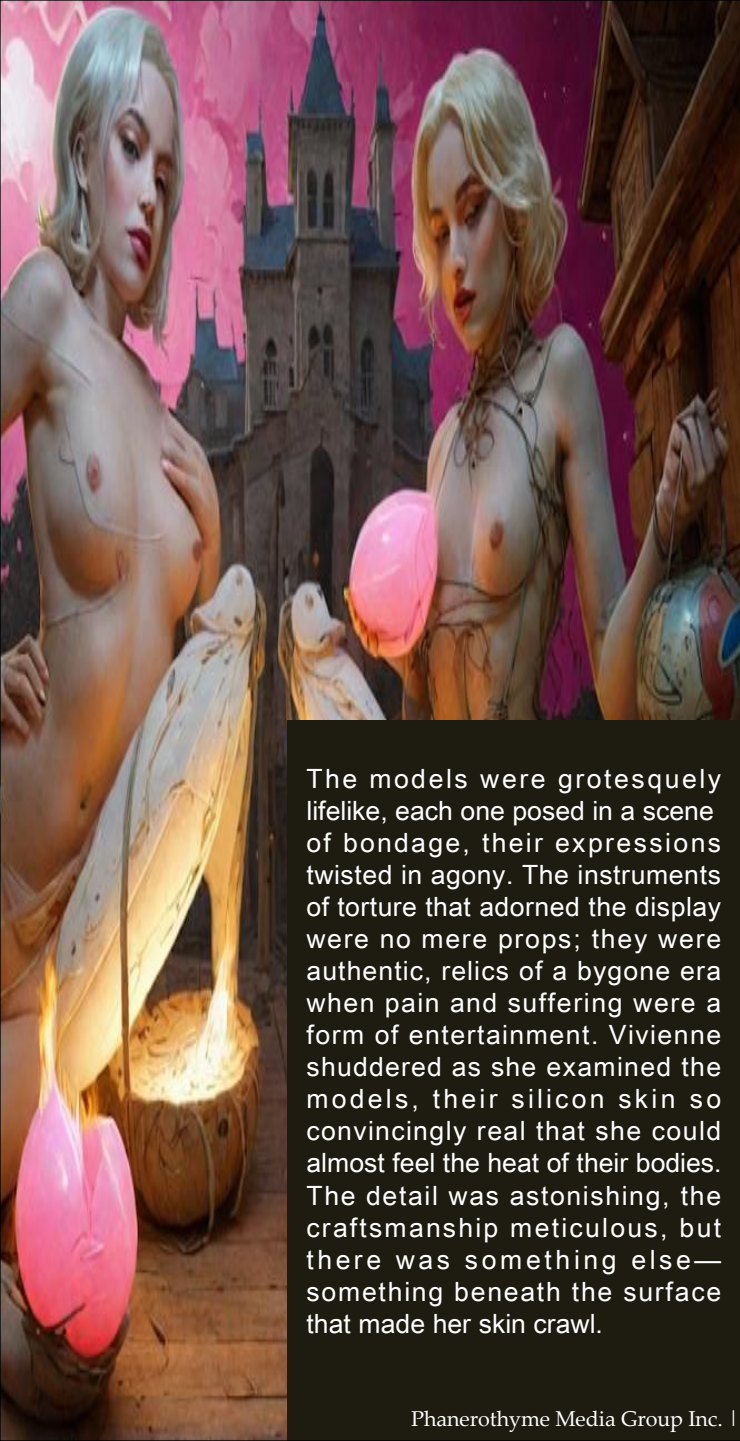
Vivienne Wimpler, a young and determined police officer, had been sent to investigate the mysterious disappearances of several beautiful, young women, all of whom had once worked at the exhibition. There had been whispers of something foul lurking within the walls of the exhibit, something beyond the mere artifice of the silicon models. Vivienne had her suspicions, but they were too bizarre to share with her superiors. Instead, she resolved to investigate alone, her training and stubborn will driving her forward despite the growing sense of dread that clung to her like a shroud.

LVIII

As she stepped into the dimly lit hall, Vivienne's breath caught in her throat. The darkness pressed in on her from all sides, and the faint glow of the display lights only served to heighten the eerie atmosphere. Her heart raced as she forced herself to move forward, each step echoing like a death knell in the silence. She had come here with a purpose, but now, standing in the midst of the exhibition, she couldn't shake the feeling that she had made a terrible mistake.

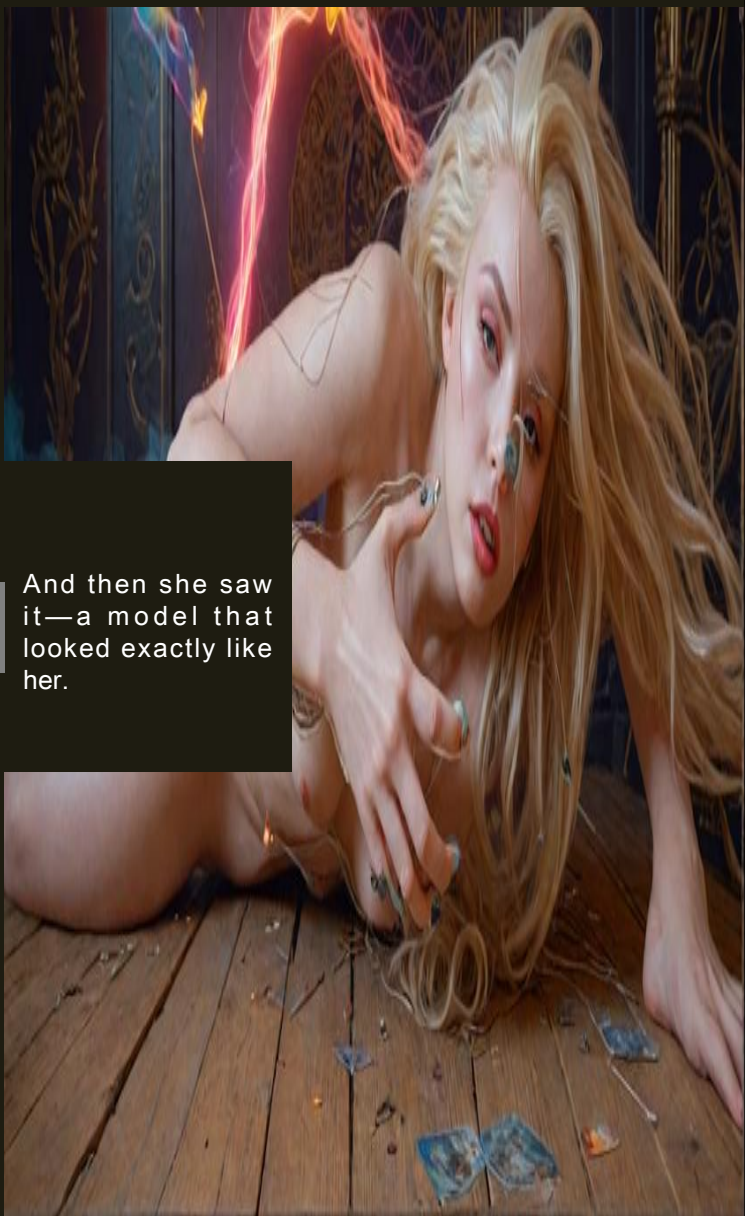
LIX





LX

The models were grotesquely lifelike, each one posed in a scene of bondage, their expressions twisted in agony. The instruments of torture that adorned the display were no mere props; they were authentic, relics of a bygone era when pain and suffering were a form of entertainment. Vivienne shuddered as she examined the models, their silicon skin so convincingly real that she could almost feel the heat of their bodies. The detail was astonishing, the craftsmanship meticulous, but there was something else—something beneath the surface that made her skin crawl.



LXI

And then she saw
it—a model that
looked exactly like
her.



The shock of recognition nearly brought her to her knees. There, in the centre of the room, bound and gagged in a grotesque parody of submission, was a perfect replica of herself. The eyes, wide with terror, seemed to stare straight into her soul, and for a moment, she could have sworn she saw the chest rise and fall with shallow breaths. She stumbled back, her mind reeling, as she tried to comprehend what she was seeing. How could this be? Who could have created such a thing?

LXII



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Her thoughts were interrupted by a sudden, sharp pain in her chest—a memory of another time, another place. The sensation of nails raking across her skin, the sting of a punch that had left her bruised and battered. The memory came flooding back with horrifying clarity—the fight in the castle, the cruel laughter of the Countess Lynda Moore as she watched her niece and Amy, the maid, pummel each other for her amusement. Vivienne had won, but the victory had come at a cost, one she was only now beginning to understand.

She had thought herself strong, capable, a woman who could face any challenge and emerge victorious. But here, in this twisted hall of horrors, she felt her strength ebbing away, replaced by a cold, numbing fear. The silicon models were not just art—they were a warning, a glimpse into the fate that awaited her. She was not just investigating a crime; she was walking into a trap.

LXIV

The sound of footsteps on the cold marble floor snapped her back to the present. High heels, clicking rhythmically, drawing closer with each passing second. Vivienne's breath caught as she turned to face the sound, her heart pounding in her chest. She knew who it was before she even saw her—the Countess, with her cruel smile and icy gaze, the woman who had orchestrated it all.



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And then there she was, stepping out of the shadows, her eyes glinting with malice. The Countess moved with a feline grace, her fingers trailing along the displays as she approached, her lips curling into a smile as she took in Vivienne's terror.

"You were always my favourite, dear niece," the Countess purred, her voice dripping with false affection. "Such spirit, such fire. But even the brightest flame can be snuffed out.

"Vivienne tried to move, to run, but her feet felt like lead, her body paralysed by fear. The Countess reached out, her fingers brushing against Vivienne's cheek, sending a shiver down her spine.

"You should have stayed away," the Countess whispered, her breath hot against Vivienne's ear. "But now that you're here, we might as well finish what we started."

LXVI

The Countess stepped back, her smile widening as she gestured to the model in the centre of the room. "This is your future,

Vivienne. A permanent place in my collection." Vivienne's eyes widened in horror as she realised the truth. The models were not just silicon—they were real women, trapped in a nightmarish limbo, their souls bound to the twisted creations that bore their likeness. And she was next.



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"No!" Vivienne screamed, but the sound was swallowed by the darkness. The Countess laughed, a cold, hollow sound that echoed through the chamber as she turned and walked away, her heels clicking against the floor.

And then, there was only silence.

Vivienne stood frozen, her mind racing as she tried to find a way out, a way to escape the fate that awaited her. But the darkness pressed in, suffocating her, and she knew, deep down, that there was no escape. The exhibit had claimed her, just as it had claimed so many before her.

As the last vestiges of hope slipped away, Vivienne closed her eyes, her body trembling with fear. And in that moment, she understood the true horror of the Degenerate Art Exhibition.

LXVIII

It was not just a place of nightmares—it was a place where nightmares became reality.



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words trying to build poetry

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**short stories for a society that
does not retain information**



ROMA

Ex Typographia Reverenda Camera Apostolica. 1664.

Superius permissa, & Privilegio.



INTERNET ARCHIVE



Rodrigo Granda, known as Phaneinthymos, encapsulates a blend of diverse passions and pursuits, embodying the roles of a bibliophile, digital artist, creative writer, and transhumanist. Here's an expanded look at these aspects of his identity:

1. Bibliophile: Rodrigo Granda's deep love for books and literature reflects a commitment to intellectual growth and a perpetual quest for knowledge. This passion not only enriches his personal life but also profoundly influences his creative outputs, providing a wealth of inspiration and a deep well of ideas drawn from various literary genres and traditions.

2. Digital Artist: As a digital artist, Granda explores the intersection of technology and art, utilizing modern tools to create visually compelling works. His artistry likely spans various forms, including digital paintings, illustrations, and possibly multimedia projects. This role allows him to express his creativity in ways that are contemporary and innovative, pushing the boundaries of traditional art forms.

3. Creative Writer: Granda's skills as a creative writer enable him to craft engaging narratives, whether through prose, poetry, or other forms of written expression. His bibliophilic background informs his writing, imbuing his stories with rich, layered storytelling and a profound understanding of literary techniques. This aspect of his identity highlights his ability to convey complex ideas and emotions through the written word.

4. Transhumanist: Embracing transhumanism, Granda is an advocate for the enhancement of human capabilities through advanced technology. This forward-thinking philosophy likely influences his artistic and literary work, as he explores themes related to human evolution, the integration of technology with the human body, and the ethical considerations of such advancements. As a transhumanist, he is interested in the potential for technology to not only improve human life but also to fundamentally transform it.



By intertwining these varied interests and roles, Rodrigo Granda, as Phaneinthymos, represents a unique fusion of intellectual curiosity, artistic creativity, and visionary thinking. His work, whether in literature, digital art, or philosophical exploration, reflects a dynamic and multifaceted approach to understanding and shaping the future.

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